

**Statement**  
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Disability studies is an academic discipline which overlaps most other academic fields. In the same way that women's studies overlaps sociology, anthropology, literary criticism, history, psychology, etc., disability studies also overlaps with those and other fields. As with women's studies, it is not value free nor is any other discipline really. However, disability studies makes its value positions explicit unlike many other disciplines, which pretend to be value free. The value positions include the notion that disability is more than a little bit caused by environmental factors, that equality is a goal, and that the voice of disabled people needs to be heard in the research.

Those value positions do limit the fields which can be included within disability studies - for example, medicine probably can not be included. On the other hand, disability studies is also an academic discipline so it needs to adhere to the rules of evidence and research methodologies used within these overlapping disciplines. Thus, disability studies research which comes out of a sociological tradition needs to adhere to the rules of evidence and methodologies espoused by sociology.

While research done within disability studies can and should be used for policy or advocacy, it should not itself be advocating. There is a very thin, perhaps impossibly thin, line between not being value free but also not advocating, but that thin line should be adhered to.

Where should SDS be going? SDS was set up to be a professional organization for scholars in disability studies. I hope it will be able to continue to be that. Like professional organizations in other fields, its goal is to present and showcase the best and most recent theoretical advances and research results in the field. Those advances and results may be used to support advocacy positions taken by the organization as well as those taken by individuals within the organization.

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